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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION SPECIAL, DECEMBER 21-23: GCC
SUMMIT IN KUWAIT

1. News stories: All newspapers report on December 23 the contents of the final communique issued at the conclusion of the GCC Summit in Kuwait on December 22. Al-Watan, Al-Anba and Al-Rai Al-Aam published the full official text of the communique. Among the points of the communique highlighted in the reportage were:

- Approval of a GCC pact to combat terrorism
- Support for Saudi Arabia's proposal on reviewing educational curricula in GCC countries
- Support for the US plan to transfer sovereignty to the Iraqi people
- Call to prosecute all those who committed "crimes against humanity" in Iraq
- Denunciations of the terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia over the past months and the killing of Kuwaiti POWs and Iraqis by the "former Iraqi regime"
- Support for the Road Map peace plan and denunciation of "Israeli aggressions"
- Affirmation of the "importance of women in society" and a recommendation to refer the issue of women's political rights to "relevant ministerial committees"
- Plans for customs union and common market by 2007, and a unified currency by 2010
- Call for Israel's signature to the Non-Proliferation Treaty
- Support for UAE in a dispute with Iran over the sovereignty of three islands

Al-Qabas reports that the closing session of the GCC Summit was delayed by four hours due to disputes over the paragraphs related to reforming education and the role of Gulf women. Al-Qabas highlights on their December 23 front page that the paragraph welcoming the arrest of Saddam was absent from the final communique.

All newspapers report that in his speech marking the opening of the GCC Summit on December 21, Prime Minister, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed said Iraq was now heading towards democracy and that Gulf states must unite to combat terrorism.

A GCC citizen in Kuwait has been arrested with plans of and directions for using surface-to-air missiles along with maps of locations in Kuwait and other GCC countries, according to Al-Rai Al-Aam and Al-Watan.

All newspapers report Kuwaiti efforts to mend the differences between Qatar and Saudi Arabia on the sidelines of the GCC Summit.

Al-Watan reports that the Minister of Education Dr. Rasheed Al-Hamad called on the GCC Summit to take up the issue of reform of educational curricula. Al-Qabas reports that on December 22 that Islamist MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei stated that the idea of reforming educational curricula in Islamic countries " was born from the womb Right wing and Zionist institutions in the United States who adopt a policy of aggression towards Islam."

3. "Let Us Believe In Our Leaders"

Editor-in-chief of independent Al-Qabas, Waleed Al-Nesf opined (12/21): "This is the third GCC summit in Kuwait since its liberation and the first after Saddam. We should help to position the Iraqis on the right track, and help them in the reconstruction of Iraq. We tell our leaders that

they must tackle the major issues such as confronting terrorism, and numerous political, economical and education reforms in addition to discussing freedom of opinion."

14. "Eliminating Terrorism"

Editor-in-chief of independent Al-Anba, Bibi Al-Marzook opined (12/21): "Many changes have taken place in the region after August 2, 1990 [the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait] and September 11, 2001. GCC countries have been targeted more than any others by terrorism. Combating the extremist ideology requires changing the way of thinking that is taught at schools. What we hope most is that our governments can achieve security and stability, because if terrorism continues the Gulf region will end up paying a dear price."

15. "A Historical Opportunity for Change"

Islamist Salafi Dr. Wael Al-Hasawi wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (12/21): "For the first time ever, GCC countries do not feel an external threat, especially from the Iraq. However, this does not mean that there are not threats from terrorist groups active in the Gulf that seek to destabilize the region. [GCC leaders] must first pay attention to vital and important issues, such as allowing their people to participate in running the affairs of their countries [in order to exploit the opportunities before them]. Second, they must work on unifying the Gulf region by establishing a federal system. And third, they should freeze expenditures on weapons and instead work on establishing a unified GCC army to confront any possible aggression."

16. "What Do We Want From the GCC Summit?"

Mohammad Al-Babtain wrote in independent Al-Watan (12/21): "The GCC must focus on the strategic changes occurring in the region and on establishing a Gulf common market. GCC leaders must also work on activating the role of the GCC in the Middle East region in establishing a decisive and direct stance concerning terrorism and the means to combat it."

17. "The GCC and the People's Unity"

Conservative Islamist Dr. Sami Khalifa wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (12/20): "Gulf-wide unity remains a popular aspiration in the GCC countries. While GCC unity has become a popular political demand, no serious attempts have been made by [the governments of] member states to translate this demand into reality. In the aftermath of the fall of Saddam's regime, current political circumstances dictate the meeting of the aspirations of GCC countries' nationals towards the unity of the member states."

18. "The Summit: Between Optimism and Pessimism"

Dr. Shamlan Al-Essa wrote in independent Al-Seyassah (12/23): "The final communiqu [of the GCC Summit] was prepared before the beginning of the summit. It does not consist of any new resolutions except for forming a committee to study the possibility of linking the GCC countries by a railway. Issues like education, combating terrorism and the relations with the new Iraq were not highlighted during the summit. For whatever reason, the decisions adopted by the GCC in Kuwait were very ordinary."

19. "What Comes After the Summit"

Lawyer Jamal Al-Kandari wrote in independent Al-Watan (12/23): "The GCC final communiqu did not reach decisive decisions on important issues that should have been solved in previous summits. Issues such as a unified currency and new investment laws were not solved during the GCC summit, in contrast to the Europeans who succeeded in solving many issues [during their summit]. We agree that issues like Iraq and terrorism are important, but that does not mean that we ignore other important issues to the GCC countries. Our leaders must understand that the world today is different that it was 25 years ago, and therefore, our challenges are greater."

MORAN